

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 EUR-08 CU-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 CIAE-00 SP-02 L-01 SAM-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 /049 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:RMMAXIM:CB

APPROVED BY IO:SWLEWIS

IO/UNP:GBHELMAN

IO/UNESCO:RCHEATER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236643

LIMDIS: NESCO

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PORG, OCON, UNESCO, US, IS

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT APPROACH TO ISRAELIS ON UNESCO
MISSION TO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

REF: STATE 233912

1. SUMMARY:

IO ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEWIS CALLED IN ISRAELI
EMBASSY DCM BAR-ON SEPTEMBER 22 TO URGE GOI
RECONSIDERATION OF ITS REFUSAL TO AGREE TO THE VISIT OF
A UNESCO TEAM TO THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BEFORE
EARLY 1977, AS WELL AS TO ADVISE UNESCO BEFORE
SEPTEMBER 24 IF ISRAEL IS WILLING TO REOPEN DISCUSSIONS
WITH DG M'BOW ON TIMING OF THE VISIT. LEWIS
EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ENABLING M'BOW TO CLAIM
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CREDIBLY THAT UNESCO HAS MOVED FORWARD MEANINGFULLY

ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ISSUE AND THEREBY ENHANCING HIS CAPABILITY OF MOBILIZING AFRICAN VOTES TO DEFER SUBSTANTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE AT THE COMING UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE. BAR-ON REPLIED THAT GOI FELT IT HAD GONE FAR TO MEET M'BOW'S REQUIREMENTS AND THAT THERE WERE PRACTICAL REASONS FOR POSTPONING VISIT. HOWEVER, BAR-ON PROMISED TO RELAY U.S. VIEWS TO THE

GOI IMMEDIATELY AND ADVISE US OF THEIR RESPONSE.

END SUMMARY.

2. IO ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEWIS CALLED IN ISRAELI DCM HANIN BAR-ON SEPTEMBER 22 TO URGE ISRAELI RECONSIDERATION OF ITS OBJECTIONS -- CONVEYED BY LETTER FROM ALLON TO DIRECTOR GENERAL M'BOW ON SEPTEMBER 14 -- TO THE VISIT BEFORE EARLY 1977 BY A UNESCO TEAM OF EXPERTS TO VISIT THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TO REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL-CULTURAL SITUATION. LEWIS NOTED THAT IF GOI READY AT LEAST TO RE-DISCUSS MATTER WITH M'BOW IT SHOULD CONVEY WORD OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO UNESCO BEFORE SEPTEMBER 24 WHEN M'BOW WILL RETURN TO PARIS AND MAY SEND A RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 14 ALLON LETTER WHICH COULD CLOSE THE DOOR TO FURTHER DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUE.

3. LEWIS EMPHASIZED THAT POSTPONEMENT OF A TEAM VISIT UNTIL EARLY 1977 WOULD BE COMPLETELY SELF-DEFEATING FOR OUR COMMON EFFORTS TO HAVE SUBSTANTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE DEFERRED AT THIS NEXT GENERAL CONFERENCE OR, AT MINIMUM, TO AVOID GC PASSAGE OF A STRONGLY CONDEMNATORY RESOLUTION THAT WOULD LOCK-IN UNESCO AND, BY REACTION, THE ISRAELIS INTO A CONFRONTATION ON THE ISSUE. M'BOW FELT HE NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER TO THE GC A PRELIMINARY REPORT AND SAY THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A DETAILED REPORT AS THE RESULT OF ANOTHER VISIT, PERHAPS NEXT SPRING, TO STAVE OFF AN ARAB RESOLUTION ON ISSUES.

4. LEWIS NOTED THAT THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
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QUESTION WAS PART OF THE COMPLEX OF ISSUES BEARING DIRECTLY ON U.S. EFFORTS TO REVERSE THE SITUATION CREATED WITH UNESCO BY THE 1974 GENERAL CONFERENCE ANTI-ISRAELI DECISIONS. WE SAW A STRONG POSSIBILITY OF REALIZING HEADWAY ON THE ISRAEL-EUROPEAN REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATTER. HOWEVER AFRICAN VOTES WOULD BE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR COMMON EFFORTS ON OTHER SENSITIVE ISSUES.

5. LEWIS OBSERVED THAT AFRICAN VOTES WERE CRUCIAL TO M'BOW'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN DEFERRAL OF SUBSTANTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE ITEM AND THEREBY THE DEBATE AND CONSEQUENT RESOLUTION THIS WOULD ENTAIL. THE CRITICAL TACTICAL QUESTION, IN OUR VIEW, IS HOW FAR M'BOW CAN PERSUADE THE AFRICANS TO GO ALONG WITH HIM, RATHER THAN GIVE IN TO ARAB PRESSURES.

M'BOW'S CREDIBILITY WITH THE AFRICANS WAS THEREFORE CRUCIAL AND DEPENDENT UPON HIS BEING ABLE TO REPORT AT LEAST A MINIMUM OF UNESCO FOLLOW-UP IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE THE LAST GENERAL CONFERENCE CALLED FOR THE DG TO REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL-CULTURAL SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

6. BAR-ON ARGUED THAT M'BOW WAS ALREADY IN A POSITION TO REPORT TO THE GC THE ISRAELI AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO A UNESCO VISIT, AND COULD ANNOUNCE THAT A UNESCO SECRETARIAT MEMBER OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVE M'BOW MIGHT DESIGNATE WOULD BE ADMITTED BY THE GOI TO MAKE A PRELIMINARY REPORT; A BASIS ON WHICH M'BOW COULD PLEAD FOR FURTHER TIME. LEWIS EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT GOI'S AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO RECEIVE UNESCO EXPERTS -- AND POINTED OUT THAT SINCE GOI LETTER ADMITTED POSSIBILITY OF IMMEDIATE PRELIMINARY VISIT BY SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL, IT SHOULD NOT BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RECEIVE PRELIMINARY VISIT BY EXPERT GROUP INSTEAD.

7. BAR-ON SEEMED IMPRESSED WITH LEWIS' POINT ON M'BOW'S CREDIBILITY. BAR-ON PROMISED TO REPORT OUR VIEWS ON THE TIMING OF THE VISIT TO THE GOI
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IMMEDIATELY AND ADVISE US AS SOON AS HE HAD A RESPONSE.

ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE236643
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RMMAXIM:CB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760360-0157
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760926/aaaaavxl.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 233912
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT APPROACH TO ISRAELIS ON UNESCO MISSION TO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
TAGS: PORG, OCON, OTRA, US, IS, UNESCO, (LEWIS, SAMUEL W)
To: PARIS TEL AVIV
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006